

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OPPENEER APPOINTED AS PART-TIME MAGISTRATE JUDGE

MADISON, WI—On July 23, 2009, Chief Judge Barbara B. Crabb appointed Peter A. Oppeneer to serve as a part-time United States Magistrate Judge in the United States District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin. Oppeneer, who also serves as the court's clerk of court, was recommended unanimously for the position by a three-member citizen selection panel established by the court. He will serve a four-year term.

The duties of a magistrate judge include conducting most preliminary proceedings in criminal cases, trying and disposing of misdemeanor cases, and conducting various pretrial matters and evidentiary proceedings on delegation from the judges of the district court. Oppeneer will serve as back-up to the court's full-time magistrate judge, Stephen L. Crocker, who was appointed in 1992.

Oppeneer, 49, served as a career law clerk to Judge John C. Shabaz from 1987 until 2008, when he left that position to become clerk of court.

As of now, the Western District of Wisconsin is the only district court with a combined clerk/magistrate judge. The District of New Hampshire and the Northern Mariana Islands were authorized combination positions by the Judicial Conference at its meeting in September 2009.

The Western District of Wisconsin has had a combined magistrate judge/clerk of court since the early 1970s, when then-clerk Joseph Skupniewitz was appointed as part-time magistrate.